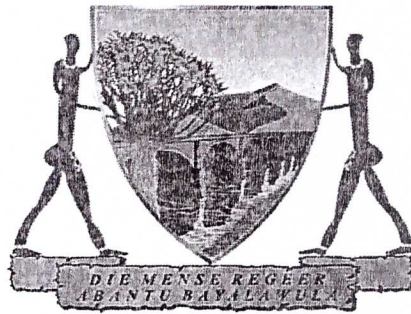


//Khara Hais Municipality



COMMUNICATION STRATEGY



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1. Background

The //Khara Hais Municipality is a local municipality in the Northern Cape province of South Africa. It falls within the ZF Mgcawu District and governs the town of Upington and surrounding rural areas. As of 2011 the municipality had a population of approximately 93 500 people, and covered an area of 21 780 km².

The Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 requires municipalities to develop a culture of municipal governance that compliments formal representative government with a system of participatory governance. To meet this requirement, Council has to, among other things, ensure community information concerning the available mechanisms, processes and procedures is disseminated to encourage and facilitate community participation.

The Communication Strategy of the //Khara Hais Municipality sets the broad framework for municipal communication and it is the standard against which the success or failure of communication during the 2014/2015 financial year will be measured. The Strategy explains what issues Council intends communicating, to whom and how.

Political leadership and oversight of the communication function locally is a critical success factor in ensuring healthy communication within communities. It is only when communication functions are properly reported on, accounted for, monitored and evaluated, that municipal communicators are able to effectively support the implementation of a municipality's programme of action as contained in the legislative framework and the Integrated Development Programme.

2. What the strategy aims to achieve

The Communication Strategy aims to create a climate of understanding, commitment and support that will contribute to the success and effectiveness of the municipality to comply with legislation. The Strategy aims:

- To make sure the municipality have appropriate ways of engaging people in the affairs of the municipality.
- To provide up to date information about the work of the municipality.
- To develop electronic communications to provide information and services by remote access to all those who need information on demand.
- To strengthen the Municipality's image and public awareness of it's services through use of consistent Corporate Branding, which is guided by a Corporate Identity Manual.
- To promote effective media relations and to encourage accurate reporting and coverage of events and issues relating to the municipality, recognizing that the media may represent alternative views to those of the municipality.



3. Objectives

- To ensure an accountable, open, transparent and responsive local government.
- To comply with all relevant statutory prescripts regarding making available of information held by the municipality.
- To ensure public participation and support to Integrated Development Plan (IDP) which is aligned for both provincial and local government.
- To promote community awareness campaigns towards meaningful participation of civil society in municipal activities and government as a whole.
- To support, strengthen and build the communications capacity and its effectiveness in all communicators in the municipality.
- To strengthen and sustain media relations and to communicate pro actively with the media.
- To aggressively market the EDM programmes and to strengthen and improve an effective internal and external communication system.

4. Context

- For this financial year the main focus will be on cooperative governance, media and the public.
- In light of the improved, unqualified audit received from the Auditor General, more needs to be done to highlight and enhance the image of the municipality.
- There are benefits for the municipality through tourism attractions and SMME's through profiling the municipality.
- Align communication to developmental municipal structures (i.e. councillors, ward committee, etc) to prevent service delivery protests.

5. Environmental Analysis

The Municipality consist of 14 wards which, very wide spread, has a lot of infrastructure challenges among other things.



6. Legislative Mandate

- Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000.
- Municipal Finance Management Act, 56 of 2003.
- Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Framework Act, 2005
- Media Development and Diversity Act, 14 of 2002
- Promotion of Access to Information Act, 3 of 2000

7. Communication Messengers

It is very important for all who are involved with the Municipality to understand the themes and messages that out to be communicated, which by and large articulate its position and how the municipality wants to be perceived by its customers and citizens.

- a) It is important that we should identify who should deliver the messages to the relevant audiences or stakeholders.
- b) This strategy proceeds from the premise that messages have more impact if they are delivered by the political principals rather than officials. Accordingly all campaigns must be characterised by increased public appearances of political principals as well as exposure of the political principals as public faces of the municipality.
- c) It goes without saying that the mayor shall be the principal communicator of the municipality. The speaker, the Executive Committee are collectively and individually communicators on matters of governance.
- d) Senior Management that is, The Municipal Manager and Directors shall be the communicators on technical and administrative matters.
- e) However, it is important that communicators should possess the following attributes:
 - *They should have knowledge of and show support for the messages*
 - *They should have knowledge of the audience and credibility within the organization*
 - *They should have good interpersonal skills and the ability to listen and gain the confidence of the audience*
 - *They should have the ability to convey regular, clear, concise, timeous and focused messages to avoid distortion and miscommunication.*
 - *They should be honest and encourage open two way communication*



8. Method of Communication

Government's national communications policy calls for a consistent approach to communication across all sphere. It provides the following guidelines in this regard:

- **Publicity Campaigns:** The most cost effective way of communicating with the public is to use existing mass media that is local community newspaper and local radio stations.
- **High Level Communication:** Municipal Communicators should be able to communicate at a high level with opinion formers, especially the media and community based organisations.
- **Grass roots communication:** Municipality should also be able to communicate with the general public, through community liaison and use of mass media.
- **Educational Communication:** Municipality should be in a position to launch educational campaigns of government programs.

9. Mandate

The national communication strategy has to serve the primary objective of communicating the country's programmes. The environment demands that government details its programmes to fulfill its mandate with emphasis on:

- Speeding up economic growth and transforming the economy to create decent work and sustainable livelihoods as pointed out in the nine point plan outlined by the President in the 2015 State of Nation Address .
- A massive program to build economic and social infrastructure.
- Supporting the Municipality with fulfilling the mandate of delivering services to communities in our jurisdiction.

With the local government elections due to take place in just under a year, it is anticipated that government's performance in implementing its mandate, in particular those aspects that impact on people's lives directly will come under intense scrutiny.

10. Back to Basics Approach

"WORKING TOWARDS BUILDING A RESPONSIVE, CARING AND ACCOUNTABLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT"

Lots have been achieved in local government building since 1995. With the Back to Basics Campaign, the following challenges in municipalities has been identified:



- A collapse in core municipal infrastructure services in some communities, resulting in services either not being provided at all or provided at unacceptable low levels.
- Slow or inadequate responses to service delivery challenges are in turn linked to the breakdown of trust in the institutions and councillors by communities.
- Social distance by our public representatives is a major cause for concern. This reflects inadequate public participation and poorly functioning ward councillors and committees.
- Municipalities also need to be driven by appropriately skilled personnel and their correct placement.

The Back to Basics Approach has indicators in place that will measure whether municipalities are performing in terms of the "basics", namely:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| a) <i>Putting people first</i> | b) <i>Delivering basic services</i> |
| c) <i>Good Governance</i> | d) <i>Sound Financial Management</i> |
| e) <i>Building Capacity</i> | |

It is the intend of the Back to Basics Approach to ensure that local government is accountable to the citizens they serve and that in turn citizens must have the tools and forums in which they can hold councillors that they have elected accountable for the electoral promises they have made. The Communications unit will support greater accountability and transparency by collating and publishing the back to basic indicators for public use.

The communication environment in the municipality, with the various protests taking place, demands the need for vigorous consultation with communities to address their needs and also to communicate the programs of action of the municipality. We furthermore, need to enhance the images of our Political Principals in local media. The strategy also seeks to ensure greater support to local municipalities in developing community engagement plans targeting hotspots and potential hotspot areas.

11. **Community Liaison**

The Communications Unit should co-ordinate the delivery of Community Services, plans and programmes to promote and achieve the Social responsibility objectives of the municipality. Execution of procedural and administrative requirements, interacting with community based structures to facilitate alignment of needs and priorities, creating awareness and encouraging participation and, attending to arrangements in respect of specific events/ programmes in accordance with budgetary allocations in order to ensure social upliftment and development objectives are accomplished.

